

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2022

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to urgently request your Administration redesignate and extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nicaragua. Florida is home to a vibrant community of Nicaraguans many of whom are undocumented and have resided in the U.S. for years while unrest in Nicaragua continues. The recent expiration of Nicaragua's TPS designation places more than 4,500 Nicaraguans that fled the destruction of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and the more than 60,000 Nicaraguans fleeing repression of the Daniel Ortega regime at grave risk if they are forcibly repatriated.

Since the initial designation in 1998, conditions in Nicaragua continue to deteriorate. The combined effect of the Ortega regime's socio-political oppression, failed response to the COVID pandemic, and back-to-back hurricanes in early 2020 crippled economic opportunity of the already second-poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. According to the World Bank, the widespread instability of these crises between 2018 and 2020 drove an almost 9% loss in Gross Domestic Product and reduced family incomes in 44 percent of households by mid-2021.

Recent action by Daniel Ortega and his socialist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) Party to jail and torture political opposition during the 2021 election demonstrate their commitment to violence and repression of the Nicaraguan People, while justice eludes the families of up to 600 peaceful protesters murdered by the regime in 2018. Since then, Ortega further solidified his dictatorial rule by systematically dismantling all democratic processes of government, leaving Nicaragua unsafe for the nearly 65,000 Nicaraguans currently seeking refuge in the United States.

In April 2022, repression worsened when Ortega-controlled parliamentary commissions put forward criminal legislation to tighten penalties and subject protesters and political challengers to additional repressive measures such as confiscation of assets. Parliament has also shut down or expelled at least 454 human rights, education, medical, professional and development organizations since November 2018. Academic freedom and the autonomy of universities are also threatened. At least 12 institutions are now under state control after their legal status was arbitrarily canceled.

Congress gave the administration the power to grant Temporary Protected Status to provide humanitarian relief to citizens whose countries were suffering from protracted conflict. Given the growing political, economic, and human rights crises, we strongly urge you to redesignate and extend the original 1998 TPS designation and to protect tens of thousands of Nicaraguan men, women, and children who would face great risk to their safety should they return to Nicaragua at this time. We further call on you to take all

actions within your authority to support the Nicaraguan diaspora whether located here in the U.S., still trapped in Nicaragua, or struggling to find their place abroad.

Thank you for your consideration.

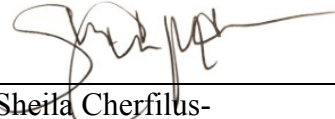
Sincerely,



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-
McCormick
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress